

Section 6 – Partecipazione e Movimenti Sociali

Chairs: Gianni Piazza, Massimiliano Andretta

Panel 6.4 Immigration as contentious issue: actors, media and strategies

Immigration has become one of the most debated issues in contemporary western democracies (Hepburn and Zapata-Barrero 2014), shaping in most of the cases the political communication in the course of electoral campaigns. The refugee crisis had a huge impact on the European political landscape (della Porta 2018). At the crossroads between solidarity manifestations, migrants' struggles and harsh oppositions, refugees and asylum seekers flows intersecting the European territory have rapidly become a controversial issue, especially in those countries more affected by them (Zamponi 2018; Andretta and Pavan 2018).

The issue is at the centre of the propaganda put forward by new or renewed populist or far-right parties and leaders, as it became the main tool for them to gain media attention and electoral consent (Mudde 2007). Though voters' preferences are also shaped by political discourses (Dunleavy and Ward 1981), and by media (see Kosho 2016 specifically on the immigration issue), those political actors try to exploit people's attitudes of closure towards immigrants, deepened by the economic crisis and the more recent refugees crisis, and especially widespread among European citizens (Esipova, Ray, Pugliese, Tsubutashvili 2015). Moreover, in the protest arena not only both anti-immigrants and pro-immigrants attitudes are the more and more expressed in grass-roots protests (della Porta 2018; Andretta and Pavan 2018), but also the migrants as autonomous actors have a central role in struggles and mobilizations for better life and work conditions, the rights to move and for housing (Mudu and Chattopadhyay 2017).

In this panel, we host papers dealing with immigration as contentious issue at the crossroads between electoral arena, media arena and protest arena, drawn on empirical investigation and theoretical perspective. Case studies, comparative investigations and longitudinal studies are welcome, in one of the three arenas selected and/or across them. We therefore encourage submissions addressing the following research questions:

1. Discussing the media arena: to what extent media strategies affect public opinion on the immigration issue? How do media frame the immigration issue and what are the main differences across media, countries and local contexts? What is the impact of new media use on the media system in this respect? What kind of political actors (parties, movements, leaders, NGOs) prevail in the media discourse when the immigration issue is debated?
2. Discussing the electoral arena: how do parties and leaders frame the immigration issue? To what extent they discuss it during the electoral campaigns? To what extent the immigration issue is crucial for the electoral success of new populist or far-right parties? Are new or old parties alike connected with protest actors dealing with immigration? On the other hand, to what extent the immigration issue affects citizens' electoral behaviour? Are there differences across voters, time and space?
3. Discussing the protest arena: what are the main features of the actors protesting on the immigration issues? What actors prevail in the protest arena? What role do migrants

have as protest actors? What frame prevail in the protest arena? To what extent the protest arena is connected with the electoral and media arena when dealing with the immigration issue? What are the main differences across time and/or space? What are the main strategies of both anti and pro immigrant protest actors and of the migrants themselves? To what extent protest react to media, institutions and parties on the immigration issue?

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